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Question1: I think the 2002 farm bill was one of the better farm bills except it left out the small grains, vegetable and livestock producers. You need to keep a lot of this the same and expand efforts for these other areas.

A lot of your new farmers are not getting the "best" land, thus they need to have crops that are not as expensive to get into when starting an operation. Small grains and livestock is sometimes an easier way to "start farming". Your big program payments are in cotton and peanuts---two of the most expensive enterprises to invest in.

As for the program benefits paid on a particular tract and now that tract has added land value due to the payments---I do not know if you can really change this to make it not have some of the "unintended consequences".

Question2: Consider incentives to those producers who supply the type of products that meet the demand of the foreign market. Example---If a cattle producer can provide evidence to the packer that the meat from a particular animal can be traced from pasture to plate---this producer is given a financial incentive. Then the packer can meet a portion of the demands of foreign market that want additional safety issues when buying our products.

Question3: A lot of the producers in Texas have figured out legal ways to set up entities within entities, etc. to get around the payment limitation issues. That is why the general public see these operations as large farmers--because they see this as one person operating the land even though FSA records have it as an entity. So how should farm policy be designed to effectively and fairly distribute assistance to producers? Fix these loop holes---you may have to do some detailed investigations on how people have designed their entities to get around the payment limitation issues. You will step on a lot of political toes when you do this because these are the larger farmers with more political influence. County Committee members are the best at this and these are the one making the pay limit determinations.

Question4: There is still a lot of land (especially dryland acres) that needs to be placed into a CRP program. We need relief on the 25% issue because there are some counties (regions) that this may need to go to 50% or more. We have got to do more on the wind erosion, especially since a large portion of this country has suffered droughts several years in a row.

Additionally, probably an increase in the rental rates is necessary in calculating the CRP rates. County Committees are not wanting to do this because it makes land harder to find for the farmer but we have a lot of land that is not efficient, productive or viable farmland for an existing producer or a new farmer.

Question5: The RD programs for water and waste programs are essential.

More and more people are moving to what they consider rural area---they are digging individual well and septic and these action are not in the best interest of water quality. A public system serves these areas with great efficiency and public safety.

In true rural area--they need more help in the way of fire departments, etc. in order to keep their insurance premiums within reason. The RD programs are very vital for infrastructure in rural America. Although I have been involved in the past with the multi-family housing efforts in the past in NC. I have not seen the benefits in Texas as I saw in NC. Single family housing is a way for a lot of young couples to afford a home and still live in a rural community. These people really cannot afford the cost of living in a larger town so the Single Family HOusing programs have continued to simulate some growth of small towns that are on the outlieing areas of a larger town.

Question6: It is critical to support research in the items you mentioned above. Farmers are not getting the additional revenues in the typical crop markets, they need information from Universities and Research stations on how to effeciently produce organic or speciality crops or provide value-added products. Even research on drought tolerant forages, grasses, crop varieties is critical for our future.